

P. J. - Sunoco. Wednesday, March 17, 1943.

NORTH AFRICA

~~on this Wednesday day~~  
The news from North Africa is mostly from enemy sources, but its big news. The Germans announce that the British eight army has launched a huge assault against the Mareth Line, and indicate<sup>s</sup> that the all-out Allied offensive has begun. Berlin states that the strategy of Generals Alexander and Montgomery is directed at the northern end of the fortifications, where there are adjacent to the sea. The purpose is to drive northward into Tunisia along the coast. The eight army assault was prepared last night with tremendous artillery fire, and surged forward today.

The indications are that the southern British attack will be coordinated with an American drive in central Tunisia; and this one intended to cut through to the coast and split the Axis forces in two. Maybe there will be a third heavy blow---by the British in northern Tunisia.

A three fold action like that would be a logical pattern for the much awaited all out offensive to eliminate the enemy in Tunisia.

FRENCH

In North Africa, all the Vichy laws were repealed today---  
this in accordance with the announcement that administrator  
General Giraud made over the weekend. At that time he said that  
anti-democratic legislation imposed by the Vichy government would be  
abolished, and this <sup>accrued</sup> ~~happened~~ by a formal decree today.

Among the regulations now tossed out are a number of anti-  
semitic edicts that discriminated against the Jews and deprived them  
of normal rights.

~~Earlier in the day, Secretary of State Cordell Hull spoke  
in approval of Giraud's intention to abolish the Vichy laws. In  
this our secretary of state echoed the opinion of British Prime  
Minister Winston Churchill, who said the action of Giraud would be a  
long step toward the unification of the conflicting French elements.~~

From London we hear that ~~General~~ Degaulle of the Fighting  
French is soon to go to Africa for a conference with General Giraud.  
~~This was announced in a Fighting French communique.~~ The meeting of  
the two chieftains is expected to result in an agreement ~~between~~  
~~the Degaulle faction and Giraud's north African regime.~~

## RUSSIA

The news from Russia concerns the Smolensk area mostly ---on the central front facing Moscow. The Red army is driving at Yartsevo, the key to Smolensk, and has to contend with the opposition of nature as well as that of the enemy. Spring thaw in central Russia has turned the land into a sea of mud and slush, and aided by these obstacles to military movement the Germans are putting up a fierce resistance.

The regular Red army has been joined by irregular allies. Moscow tells how Soviet guerrillas have emerged from the deep forests to assail the Germans from the rear. The guerrillas have been waiting at bases deep in the dark wood lands and now they are sallying forth to join in a battle for Smolensk.

~~(Time you get in some St. Patrick's Day luncheon in your Washington copy)~~

Prosper.

## SUBMARINES

We have official Washington indication today that the Nazi submarine campaign is hurling full force in <sup>to</sup> its spring offensive ---as the indications were that it would. Elmer Davis, chief of the Office of War Information, stated that March looks like a bad month for submarine sinkings---it began badly.

"Still," said Elmer Davis, "the latter part of the month may give us a better story. January," he recalled, "also started out badly but the sinkings fell off so sharply at the end of the month that it eventually proved to be one of the best thus far." And the same thing may turn out to be true in the case of March---though the ship destruction thus far has been heavy.

Yesterday Berlin claimed that the U-boats sank sixty seven ships during the past four weeks---but this is not confirmed.

Another element in the war of transport is the German surface fleet---this threatening to join the U-boats in striking at cargo vessels. Stockholm reports that the entire Nazi sea power is concentrating in Northern Norway and the warships are said to include three battleships two pocket battleships and two air

2-Submarine

craft carriers. London, however, expresses the doubt that the Germans have even one aircraft carrier in useful service.

The obvious guess about the German naval concentration in northern Norway is that it plans to strike at the convoy route to Russia or even sally out into the Atlantic against the crossing stream of cargo vessels.

On the opposite side the British have delivered a sharp blow against Nazi transport, with the London admiralty announcing that light naval forces staged a daring dash into a Norwegian harbor and torpedoed two big merchant ships.

## COLONIES

In London today Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared once again that the British Empire, with its vast colonial possessions, is to be maintained. There had been talk that the old system of colonial empires was past and that overseas possessions should be put under some sort of international control.

This, Churchill negatived some while ago when <sup>he</sup> said--- that he hadn't become His Majesty's prime minister to preside over the dissolution of the British Empire. Today he restated <sup>is</sup> that before the House of Commons, using these words: "The Government is convinced that the administration of British colonies must continue to be the sole responsibility of Great Britain." Whereupon the Commons cheered.

## PACIFIC

The Navy announces some heavy bombings by planes and also an attack by surface ships. American bombers did their usual kind of job, only more of it than usual, when they hit the Japs in the Aleutians six times on a single day. Within one span of daylight hours they gave the Japs half a dozen smashes at Kiska.

Then, in the southwestern Pacific five raids hit five Jap bases in the Solomons, and our warships bombarded the Japs at Vila. American air raids are the usual story out there, but naval attacks have been less frequent---the one announced today being the third that we've launched by warships in the central Solomons.

A report on the United States and Japanese sky power was made today by Lieutenant General <sup>Geo.</sup> Kenney, commander of allied air forces in the southwest Pacific. General Kenney, accompanied by General Sutherland, General MacArthur's chief of staff, called on President Roosevelt at the White House and gave him the inside information. In a public statement, General Kenney declared that the quality of the Japanese war pilots is not as good as

2-Pacific

it was--unquestionably deteriorated" said the general. Their best fliers have been lost, or, as general Kenney phrased it, "their highly skilled first string team is gone." Meaning---- they have had to put in their second string team.

What about the team on our side? General Kenney stated:

"Our first team is just beginning to get in line."

All of which expresses the South Pacific air situation in football terms, making it simple and intelligible, and is our first string team full of fight? "Their morale is so high," said the general, "that it scares us sometimes." Well, if the morale <sup>sc</sup> ~~sc~~ scares the American generals, just think how the Japs must feel about it!

General Kenney commanded at the recent astonishing victory in the Bismarck sea, when twenty two ships were destroyed by American planes---an entire convoy. Elmer Davis, of the Office of War Information, stated today that of fifteen thousand Jap soldiers whom the enemy was trying to land in New Guinea, only a hundred survived the sinking of their transports.



CHINA

The Chinese report a major victory, announcing ~~that~~ the route of the Japs who in Central China pushed southward from the Yangtze. Chungking states that its armies are driving the Japs rapidly back toward the river and have captured five towns. The Chinese have trapped a large force at one important town--- Hwajung, which they are attacking with storming assaults.

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## FARM BILL

The Senate <sup>here in Washington</sup> today passed the Bankhead bill, which provides that farm workers shall be deferred from the draft. The administration was opposed to the measure, and yet the Senate passed it by a majority of fifty to twenty four. ~~Down~~ here in Washington they <sup>are</sup> saying that today's Senate action constitutes the most decisive defeat that the administration has suffered at the hands of the new Congress---which is dominated by Republicans and anti-New Deal Democrats.

The manpower commission and the army spoke strongly against the Bankhead Bill, but the Senators were wrought up about the farm labor shortage and the threat of a grave food crisis in this country. The bill, which now goes to the lower House, provides that farm workers who do a job of food production shall be kept on the land---the local draft boards to decide whether the agricultural work they do is useful enough to keep them out of the army.

At the same time, the army announced today that it will assign units of troops to help on farms, when important crops are endangered because of a shortage of labor. No individual furloughs will be given. It will not be a case of men being allowed to take

2-Farm Bill

time out <sup>for</sup> ~~from~~ military service to work on the land. The army help will be in the form of units of troops sent all together, under the command of their officers, <sup>sent</sup> to pitch in and work on the crops.

SUBMARINES

Through the office of the Secretary of the Navy today here in Washington, I met one of our ace submarine commanders. I wish you could all <sup>meet</sup> ~~know~~ him. You'd like him. ~~And, you would like him.~~ And you would be proud of him. I'm ashamed to say I don't know what his first name is. His last name is Wright and ~~xxx~~ to) everybody in Uncle Sam's Navy he is known as "The Bull" -- Commander "Bull" Wright. <sup>PP</sup> ~~And~~ On the left side of his tunic just above several ~~xxx~~ rows of decorations, including the Navy Cross, for sinking a Jap aircraft carrier, he wears a gold emblem that from a distance looks like aviators wings. But it ~~isn't~~. It's a golden submarine, the emblem of the men ~~xx~~ who serve in the ships of the under-sea. He got his big ~~xxxxxxxx~~ Jap airplane carrier, in the Straits of Makassar, early in the Pacific War, when he came up right in the middle of the enemy fleet, and fired three torpedoes from a distance of only <sup>eight</sup> ~~three~~ hundred yards, and with Jap cruisers and destroyers all around him.

Bull Wright says that 'the greatest sight of all is to see a Jap destroyer blow up, when you hit it. And he and ~~xxxxxxxx~~ the men who were with him have many victories to their credit.

~~their credit.~~

Well, what I wanted to tell you about Bull Wright of Uncle Sam's Navy is this:- He is tremendously proud of the submarine service, and thinks it ~~is~~ the most exciting and the most interesting service of all. And, he has <sup>plenty of</sup> a right to ~~xxx~~ be proud of what our submarines have done. He told me, and the Navy Department afterward confirmed it, that our submarines, <sup>for</sup> boat ~~by~~ boat, have the greatest record of them all. <sup>That is they have</sup> ~~They've~~ sunk more ships, than the Germans, ~~who~~ specialize in U-boats, <sup>and</sup> ~~who~~ depend ~~on~~ so much on what they can do in the submarine war. But, <sup>our</sup> submarines, ship for ship, have sunk more <sup>TP</sup> tonnage. Not only that, ~~but~~ but Commander Bull Wright, <sup>by the way,</sup> he doesn't look like a bull, <sup>little like the</sup> He's tall, lean, and a ~~bit on the~~ Anthony Eden type. <sup>anyhow he</sup> And, he comes from Texas. <sup>TP</sup> He told me, and again the Navy Department confirms the figures, that one-and-a-half percent of the personnel of our Navy, our men who are in submarines, have accomplished one half of the damage so far inflicted by the Navy, on the Japanese, in <sup>TP</sup> the Pacific war. So Bull Wright is <sup>certainly</sup> ~~is~~ justified in saying that we should have more submarines, and in urging our young men to enter that service. He insists

too that the risk to our own lads is not at all high in the  
*subs. That*  
~~submarines~~ *our* losses have been extremely small.

Recently the Navy Department sent him to Annapolis  
to address the Navy <sup>al</sup> Academy cadets. And I hear that after  
his speech <sup>more than</sup> two thirds of the <sup>lads at</sup> ~~boys of~~ Annapolis volunteered  
to serve in submarines. But, <sup>the Navy, to fight</sup> ~~we need far more than that.~~  
*in submarines, needs more men*  
*now than Annapolis can turn out.*

## ALERT

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Today at Los Angeles, Mayor Fletcher Bowron started an action to make things tough for people who don't follow air raid regulations. His Honor is drafting a law designed to impose a fine of five hundred dollars and six months in jail on anyone who fails to do what he is supposed to do when the siren sounds an alert.

This follows yesterday's big time air raid alarm along four hundred miles of California coast---an alarm that didn't work. People paid only slight attention to the siren and its ominous warning. Traffic just kept rolling on, instead of automobiles coming to a stop, with the drivers getting out and going indoors. Pedestrians on the sidewalks kept strolling along, or stopped to look up for a glimpse at the attacking planes. In some cases people thronged out of apartment houses to join the spectators on the street.

The air raid wardens did their job nobly, but were mostly ineffectual. They labored with earnest energy, blew their whistles, shouted and waved their arms frantically---trying to get people off the sidewalks. But the wardens got little co-operation.

Today the mayor said the activity on the streets during the alert was at least fifty per cent of normal, and added that the public apathy was what he called "little short of criminal." So today His Honor was fixing up a law to put teeth in the air raid regulations---teeth in the form of a five hundred dollar fine and six months in jail.

Today's description of yesterday's air raid drill in the Los Angeles area reminded me forcibly of something I heard several months ago. It made me recall <sup>Gen.</sup> Jimmie Doolittle's description of how the Japs in Tokyo behaved when the American bombers flew over in the Tokyo air raid. They went about their business, and paid little attention to the hostile warplanes. Jimmie said that the only explanation he could give was that the Japanese, who had had a lot of air raid drills, had become blase---and wouldn't take the real thing seriously when it happened.



## RESCUE

Here's a new version of the old thriller of rescue from the railroad track, just as the train comes thundering by.

Today at Kokomo, Indiana, Bert Sanders, a forty-six-year-old guard at a General Electric plant, was making his rounds when he happened to take a look at the nearby railroad track. He saw two small children on the track, and down the line the passenger express was coming at a rapid clip. The two tiny tots showed no sign of getting out of the way.

Bert made a fast dash to the tracks, sprinting with everything he had in his forty six year old legs. He found two-year-old Jackie Carpenter, with his foot caught between two rails. With Jackie was his three-year-old sister, Shirley. She was trying to get his foot loose.

Bert ripped open the laces of the shoe, and yanked out the little lad's foot. He got Jackie and Shirley off the track--- just as the train roared by, and ground Jackie's shoe to shreds.

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And so - l - u - t - m .

## DRIVING

I have just had a bulletin handed to me saying that the O.P.A. tonight lifted the pleasure driving ban in the eastern states, effective March Twenty-Second. And at the same time the agency cut the basic "A" gasoline ration in half. How do you like that? That's a good one on which to say, SO LONG UNTIL TOMORROW.